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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 003827

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: NOT SO NEW KID ON THE BLOCK, THE AL-FADEELA
POLITICAL PARTY

Classified By: Political Counselor Robert S. Ford for
Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

1. (C) SUMMARY. One of the key players in the negotiations over the draft Constitution was the Fadeela party and its leader Nadeen Jabiri whom we frequently saw huddling with other top Shia Coalition leaders. Touted as home-grown, intellectual and moderate, its leadership publicly supports the Constitution, opened its membership to non-Shi'a, espouses non-violence and is unfazed by Zargawi's threats of Shi'a bloodletting. Looking forward to the December 15 Iraqi national elections the party leadership has already decided on its election platform and media campaign and says it will eschew a political alliance in the election. Fadeela candidates will, according to a senior party official, focus on three issues; reconstruction of Iraq, sovereignty with improving its relationship with coalition forces; and development of economic ties with Iraq's neighbors, especially Iran and even Syria. END SUMMARY.

Background

2. (U) Although Fadeela party is a newcomer to Iraq's political scene, the party was secretly formed in the 1980s during the Saddam era. By 1992, Mohammed Sadeq al-Sadr used his new Center of Islamic Studies to go beyond Shi'a proselytization and focus on community organization, thus actively establishing Fadeela party's grass roots network.

3. (U) After Saddam had Sadr assassinated in 1999, his closest friend and colleague Nadeen Jabr vowed to keep the center alive. With the fall of Saddam, the Fadeela political party officially opened its doors.

Party Structure and Membership

4. (U) Party headquarters is located in Baghdad with four offices located in Najaf, Basra, Samawah, and Amarah. In smaller towns and city suburbs there are groups of party representatives that convey party activities and messages. Informal monthly meetings are also held in Hillah, Diwaniyah, Kut and Nasariyah. The party's budget is derived from a percentage of its TNA and provincial government members' salaries. There are no membership dues.

5. (SBU) Fadeela's political committee is located in Baghdad and is responsible for all policy decisions (with guidance from Najaf's Sheikh Mohammed al-Yacoubi). To gain membership into this prestigious committee, fellow members must recommend a candidate based on party loyalty, dedication, membership recruitment and academic standing.

6. (C) Political Committee Member and Membership Chair Mohammed Ismail al-Khouzai would not reveal to PolOff actual membership numbers at their September 15 meeting. He did say that Fadeela is interested in recruiting people with some higher education, in their mid 20-40s, who are employed. In order to become a member, two existing members must recommend a candidate.

Why Mohammed Sadeq Sadr and not Moqtada Sadr

7. (C) Khouzai told PolOff that the reason why Fadeela follows Mohammed Sadeq Sadr's legacy is because he demonstrated great leadership, had a vast knowledge and understanding of political history and courageously called for government reforms and release of detained Shi'a leaders during the Saddam era. As a result he was assassinated. Khouzai added that Moqtada lacks many of his father Mohammed Sadeq's qualities. The party considers Sadeq's true successor to be Ayatollah Kazem al-Haeri (in exile in Iran) and not Moqtada. Khouzai commentd that Fadeela party leadership wishes Moqtada well in his development and hopes he will someday mature into a smart leader by choosing to surround himself with sensible advisors.

18. (C) Khouzai was emphatic about Fadeela's refusal to strike up an alliance with other political parties. The Political Committee has made the decision to respect the view of other parties but not seek alliances. Khouzai added that alliances cheapen Fadeela's uniqueness.

19. (C) The Political Committee also decided that fear should not be a unifying political platform. Khouzai dismissed growing Shi'a concerns about Iran's influence in Southern Iraq. He reasoned that the INA, Dawa, SCIRI and Fadeela parties already have a strong hold on provincial governments and it makes no sense for them to give up control or influence to Iranian Shi'a. He also downplayed Zargawi's threat to kill all the Shia in Iraq because it cannot be worse than what Fadeela party leaders suffered during the Ba'athist times.

110. (C) Khouzai informed PolOff that the Fadeela candidates will focus on three issues; reconstruction of Iraq, sovereignty with improving its relationship with coalition forces; and development of economic ties with Iraq's neighbors, especially Iran and even Syria.
Satterfield